

# Men's Hockey Season Opener Saturday

*Posted: Wednesday, October 24, 2007*

EAU CLAIRE, Wis. - The UW-Eau Claire men's hockey team looks to start off its 2007-08 season with a win when it visits St. Scholastica this Saturday.

A year after the team went 9-14-4 overall and 2-9-3 in the National College Hockey Association (NCHA), first-year head coach **Matt Loen** is looking to improve on the ice with 17 returning letter winners including two All-NCHA players in **Sean Garrity** (*Sr.- North St. Paul, MN*) and **Greg Petersen** (*Jr.- Maple Grove, MN/Totino-Grace*).

The Blugolds are picked to finish sixth in the 2007-08 NCHA Preseason Coaches' Poll. St. Norbert College is picked to finish first followed by UW-River Falls and UW-Stout.

The Blugolds are 36-17-5 overall against St. Scholastica who are picked to finish fourth in the NCHA Preseason Poll. St. Scholastica also received votes in the USCHO.com Division III men's poll.

Eau Claire is returning its top four goal scorers in Garrity with 13 goals, **Andrew Johnson** (*Jr.- Andover, MN/Anoka*) with 10 goals, Petersen with seven goals, and **Dan Fina** (*Jr.- Fontana, WI/Glenbard South, IL*) with five goals. The Blugolds top three skaters in the assist category will also be on the ice this season in **Jesse Vesel** (*Jr.- Hibbing, MN*) with 18 assists, Peterson with 17 assists and Garrity with 14 assists. The Blugolds also have eight returning juniors and one returning senior.

Key losses include four-year letterwinner Kyle Garner, an All-WIAC honorable mention the last three seasons. Garner, a defenseman, scored nine points off eight goals and one assist including one power play goal. Garner was a team captain last season and received the Most Dedicated Player Award. Steve Dus is another key loss for the Blugolds, a four-year letterwinner with 11 points on four goals and seven assists. Dave Coleman a four-year letterwinner had eight points for the Blugolds coming off six goals and two assists.

St. Scholastica, 15-2-2 overall and 6-7-1 in the NCHA, is set to start the 2007-08 season after making its first appearance in the NCHA finals last season. St. Scholastica lost to St. Norbert in three games. The Saints graduated only two players, both defensemen; they are returning leading scores TJ Tucker and Trevor Geiger. The Saints are also returning all three of their goalies.

The puck is set to drop at 7 p.m. in Duluth when the Blugolds take on the Saints.

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